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Memories of Secret Der

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NEW YORK — "It's a time for old pals to see one another and dredge up some old stories, to embellish them a little, and to say how grand we were in the old days. It's not formal, though we are wearing tuxedos. It's family."

Michael Burke paused. An elderly man with a powerful chest but uncooperative legs limped up to him, exchanged pleasantries, and moved off into the nearby crowd of partygoers. "Quite a fellow, that one," Burke said. "But then, the O.S.S. was filled with his type."

It was just that feeling that wafted through the evening Wednesday at the annual reunion dinner of this nation's cloak-and-dagger pioneers, the men and women of World War II's Office of Strategic Services.

These were the hours when 300 of the people—many of whom had once concealed their identities—could once again share their tales of exploits fighting the Axis with weapons of espionage, sabotage and spy tactics.

Here and there, of course, familiar faces popped out of the crowd at the Hotel Pierre. Michael Burke, best known to area sports fans as the former president of the New York Yankees and as current president of Madison Square Garden, was easily recognizable. He had been O.S.S., secreted into Italy in 1943 and into France a year later to work with the Resistance.

William E. Colby, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency—a direct descendant of the O.S.S.—was sought out with regularity by former colleagues and by those who had followed his trials and tribulations as director of the CIA.

He had been O.S.S., parachuting with a squad into Norway to wreak havoc on German supply trains.

James J. Angleton, tall and stooped, was also there. He, too, had been O.S.S., preceding his counterintelligence activities with the CIA with similar work in Italy in the early '40s.

There were other familiar faces, including those of former Ambassador to France Robert Murphy, the evening's guest of honor and recipient of an award for service "in the interest of the United States and the cause of freedom" named in honor of the O.S.S.'s late founder and guiding light, Lt. Gen. William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan. Murphy was not O.S.S.

And John Weitz, the designer, who was, and Charles Collingwood, the CBS correspondent, and Clare Booth Luce, who weren't, and others who seemed familiar or not, depending upon who you were and what circle you moved in.

And Bill Juchniewicz was also present. He didn't sit on the dais with the more famous people, instead tucking his compact body behind his assigned table far in the rear of the Grand Ballroom.

Thirty-seven years ago, Juchniewicz, whose native Poland had been overrun by the Nazis, joined forces with U.S. military authorities and within a few short months was supplying intelligence data to the O.S.S. from scores of locations throughout Eastern Europe.

"I research military and factory movement, and where the supplies are sent," he said with a thick accent. "I go all the time traveling. Sometimes bus, sometimes walking, sometimes I change name. One time, I dress like woman with baby carriage filled with grenades. Nazi soldiers think I have baby, but they very wrong."

Today, Juchniewicz, 65, is retired and lives in Daytona Beach, Fla., with his memories (following the war he worked as a translator for the National Catholic Welfare Board and then for IBM) and with his pension and disability checks.

"You see this?" he asked, pulling aside the left part of his white dinner jacket and pointing to his chest where a large portion of his shirt could be seen pulsating with frightening force. "The Gestapo capture me in 1943, beat me, torture me, kick me with boots and break my ribs. My heart, it becomes enlarged and I spend rest of war in Stalag 3-B near Leipzig and then in Buchenwald concentration camps. But I was proud to be O.S.S. Very proud."

Thompson advertising agency where he retired as executive vice president at age 62 five years ago, spent a large chunk of the war in Cairo.

"We had very busy times there because we were responsible for a lot of agents," he said. "Some men, like Gen. Donovan, were afraid of nothing. One day in 1945 when I was with him in Southeast Asia, someone came into our office and suggested the general fly to an island where 30 or so O.S.S. operatives were working. The thing was, the Japanese held half of the island."

"Sure, we'd love to go, wouldn't we, Ed?" the general said. He was delighted to go. Frankly, I wasn't quite that thrilled. But we made it."

Even more low key was Kenneth Hinks, 79, whose dry sense of humor prevented those around him Wednesday evening from interpreting his reluctance to reminisce as an effort to hold valuable information from enemy hands.

One of the less recognizable, Hinks served as O.S.S. chief of planning, a key post he earned after years of unrelated work during the 1920s as a representative in Central Europe for the same J. Walter Thompson agency (he retired from the firm as a director in 1964).

"Those were exciting, very exciting days," he allowed after prodding from some friends. "But, everyday of my life is exciting to me. Actually, I can't think of anything to recount that was very exceptional."